

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 TEL AV 09485 01 OF 02 261953Z
ACTION SS-25

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O 261833Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4437
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE
USMISSION USUN NY IMMEDIATE
USMISSION SINAI

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 TEL AVIV 9485

EXDIS

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR PINT LE IS
SUBJ: WEIZMAN ON LEBANON

REF.: TEL AVIV 9347

1. SUMMARY: AMBASSADORS LEWIS AND LEONARD MET WITH WEIZMAN ON JULY 26. WEIZMAN STATED HE WOULD HAVE NO OBJECTION TO THE MOVEMENT OF A FEW HUNDRED LEBANESE SOLDIERS TO POSITIONS SOUTH OF THE LITANI "SURROUNDED BY UNIFIL". BUT HE MADE IT CLEAR THAT THE BUFFER BELT ALONG THE NORTHERN ISRAELI BORDER, INCLUDING THE CHRISTIAN ENCLAVES, WAS NOT INCLUDED IN THE AREA WHERE THE LAF SHOULD DEPLOY NOW. WEIZMAN ALSO AGREED TO URGE HADDAD TO IMPROVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE UN AND ADMITTED THAT
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WITH RESPECT TO THE SITUATION IN BEIRUT, THE GOI WAS ENGAGED IN BRINKMANSHIP. END SUMMARY

2. AMBASSADORS LEWIS AND LEONARD MET JULY 26 WITH MINISTER OF DEFENSE WEIZMAN. AMB LEONARD BEGAN BY EXPLAINING IN SOME DETAIL THE REQUIREMENT THAT SUCCESS IN IMPLEMENTING THE UNIFIL RESOLUTION BE DEMONSTRATED PRIOR TO THE SEPT DEBATE AND

VOTE ON EXTENSION OF ITS MANDATE. WEIZMAN VOLUNTEERED THAT THE GOI, CONTRARY TO ITS EARLIER EXPECTATIONS, WAS GENERALLY FAVORABLY IMPRESSED WITH UNIFIL'S PERFORMANCE TO DATE AND SUPPORTED EXTENSION OF ITS PRESENCE.

3. AMBASSADOR LEONARD THEN OUTLINED THE TWO FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEMS CONCERNING RENEWAL. HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE PROBLEMS OBVIOUSLY COULD NOT BE TOTALLY RESOLVED BY SEPTEMBER, BUT EMPHASIZED THE REQUIREMENT THAT SOME PROGRESS BE DEMONSTRATED IF SUPPORT OF THE ARAB STATES WAS TO BE RETAINED AND IF TROOP CONTRIBUTORS WERE TO CONTINUE THEIR PRESENCE. THE FIRST DIFFICULTY WAS THAT THERE HAS BEEN NO PROGRESS ON ESTABLISHING LEBANESE AUTHORITY IN SOUTHERN LEBANON AND THE SECOND CONCERNED THE QUESTION OF THE CHRISTIAN ENCLAVES AND THE REQUIREMENT FOR A BALANCED UNIFIL PRESENCE IN ALL AREAS OF SOUTHERN LEBANON, INCLUDING IN THOSE ENCLAVES.

4. AFTER CONSIDERABLE DISCUSSION INTERRUPTED BY DIGRESSIONS TO SALZBURG, LONDON, CAIRO, ALEXANDRIA AND JERUSALEM, PLUS PERSONALITY ANALYSIS OF BEGIN AND SADAT, WEIZMAN STATED THAT HE WOULD HAVE NO OBJECTION TO THE "MOVEMENT OF THE LEBANESE FLAG SOUTH OF THE LITANI." WEIZMAN DESCRIBED THIS AS THE INTRODUCTION OF A FEW HUNDRED LEBANESE SOLDIERS "SURROUNDED BY UNIFIL," STARTING AT THE LITANI AND MOVING INTO THE CURRENT UNIFIL AREA. WEIZMAN MADE IT CLEAR THAT
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THE BUFFER BELT ALONG THE NORTHERN ISRAELI BORDER WAS NOT REPEAT NOT INCLUDED IN THE AREA HE WAS AGREEING TO. HE ALSO MADE IT CLEAR THAT THE ENTIRE BELT WAS INCLUDED, NOT JUST THE CHRISTIAN ENCLAVES. "LET US FIRST SEE THE LEBANESE RMY IN TIBNON, NOT WHERE THE CHRISTIANS ARE." WEIZMAN THEN WENT ON TO SAY "WHEN IT LATER COMES TO THE (ENCLAVE) BELT, WE WILL TALK - WE WILL HAVE TO TALK SOMEDAY - HAVE TO SOLVE IT, BUT FIRST WE MUST TALK."

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AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY BONN

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5. THE DISCUSSION THEN SHIFTED TO THE SECOND PROBLEM, THAT OF RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE CHRISTIANS AND UNIFIL. IN RESPONSE TO THE URGINGS OF BOTH AMBASSADORS, WEIZMAN AGREED THAT ISRAEL WOULD TALK TO HADDAD AND SHADDIAC AND URGE THEM TO IMPROVE COOPERATION. "I WILL URGE HADDAD TO IMPROVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE UN AND WILL ENCOURAGE HIM TO BE AS GOOD AS POSSIBLE." US SIDE UNDERLINED IMPORTANCE OF FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT THROUGHOUT AREA FOR UNIFIL AND WEIZMAN SAID HE GOT THE POINT.

6. ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS THE SUBJECT SHIFTED TO THE SITUATION IN NORTHERN LEBANON AND THE PLIGHT OF THE CHRISTIANS. WEIZMAN INSISTED THAT THE GOI IS "DOING OUR BEST TO CONVINCE THE CHRISTIANS THAT THE LAST THING WE WANT TO DO IS SECRET

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TO GO INTO LEBANON TO HELP THEM - EVEN WHEN THEY ARE IN TROUBLE." HE QUALIFIED THIS BY STATING HE IS UNDER PRESSURE FROM VARIOUS PLACES CONCERNING THE WELFARE OF THE CHRISTIANS AND THEIR APPARENT LACK OF SUPPORT FROM ANYONE EXCEPT ISRAEL. HE ADMITTED THE GOI IS ENGAGED IN A VERY DIFFICULT "BRINKMANSHIP AFFAIR," FOR ISRAEL DOES NOT WANT TO SEE THE CHRISTIANS DESTROYED. AT THE SAME TIME, ISRAEL WAS DELIBERATELY TAKING MEASURES TO AVOID ANY ENCOURAGEMENT OF THE CHRISTIAN HOTHEADS AND TRYING TO KEEP THE LID ON. HE THEN SWITCHED TO THE PROBLEM OF THE SYRIANS IN LEBANON - AS HE DID SEVERAL TIMES - WONDERING IF SOME "HONORABLE" WAY FOR THEM TO GET OUT OF LEBANON COULD BE FOUND. HE MUSED ON THE POSSIBILITY OF INTRODUCTION OF A

UN PEACEKEEPING FORCE INTO NORTHERN LEBANON, AN EXCURSION NOT GIVEN ANY SUPPORT BY AMBASSADOR LEONARD. (INTERESTINGLY, DMI GAZIT TOLD AMBASSADOR LEONARD A FEW HOURS LATER THAT HE ANTENDED THE SYRIANS TO STAY IN LEBANON WHERE THEY WERE HAMSTRUNG. WE REPORTED IN REFTEL THAT GOI IS SPLIT ON THIS ISSUE.)

7. WEIZMAN NEXT ISSUED HIS STANDARD STATEMENT ON THE STATUS OF THE "GOOD FENCE" AND HIS STANDING WARNING TO THE PALESTINIANS. HE EMPHASIZED THAT THE GOI "LIKED THE (GOOD FENCE) SITUATION AS IT IS NOW AND WANTS THE INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE LEBANESE CONTINUED." HE THEN REMINDED HIS AUDIENCE THAT IT IS POSSIBLE FOR THE PALESTINIANS TO SHOOT "OVER UNIFIL" AND IF SUCH HAPPENS "NABATIYAH IS STILL THERE* ROCKETS (INTO ISRAEL) WILL MAKE US DO UNPLEASANT THINGS - WHERE UNIFIL IS NOT."

8. FINALLY, WE NOTE THAT BOTH WEIZMAN AND GAZIT EARLY IN CONVERSATIONS ASKED WHY UN WOULD NOT TAKE ON THE SECURITY PROBLEM IN BEIRUT. AMBASSADOR LEONARD EXPLAINED THAT THE UN WAS UNLIKELY TO WANT THAT PARTICULAR RESPONSIBILITY.

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9. COMMENT: IN PART, SOME PROGRESS WAS MADE IN THAT WEIZMAN INDICATED NO ISRAELI RELUCTANCE TO SEE THE LEBANESE FLAG AND ELEMENTS OF THE LEBANESE ARMY START THEIR MOVE INTO THE UNIFIL OCCUPIED AREA OF SOUTHERN LEBANON. MOVEMENT ON THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN UNIFIL AND THE CHRISTIANS IS NOT AS CLEAR. WE BELIEVE THAT HE WILL TRY TO INFLUENCE HADDAD AND COMPANY, BUT HE DID NOT ADMIT THAT THE GOI IS PREPARED TO SEE THE LEBANESE FLAG ON THE BORDER, AT LEAST NOT WITHOUT DIRECT BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS WITH THE LEBANESE FIRST. HE GAVE NO INDICATION THAT HE IS AWARE OF ANY AGREEMENT WHICH MAY HAVE BEEN REACHED BETWEEN BEIRUT AND HADDAD AND SHADDIAC AND DIRECTLY STATED THAT NO ILMAC MEETING HAS BEEN REQUESTED. IN SUM, WE SHOULD BE UNDER NO ILLUSIONS AS A RESULT OF THIS MEETING. THE SAME BASIC CONCERNS CONTINUE HERE WHICH EXISTED BEFORE UNIFIL. THESE ARE THE SECURITY OF THE NORTHERN ISRAELI BORDER, WHICH THE GOI DIRECTLY LINKS TO THE BUFFER BELT, AND THE EVEN MORE TOUCHY "GOOD FENCE" RELATIONSHIP. BUT IF THE LAF IS FINALLY ABOUT TO MOVE SOME UNITS SOUTH, THE ISRAELIS WILL NOT CAUSE THEM PROBLEMS - AT LEAST SO LONG AS THEY DEPLOY ONLY INTO AREAS NOW FULLY UNDER UNIFIL'S CONTROL. LEWIS

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